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ABSTRACT

This publication attempts to provide fundamental theory about service-learning and learning communities, along with descriptions of best practices, lessons learned, and assessment strategies. The text is designed to provide resources to help readers offer service-learning experiences for their students. Learning communities are now commonly structured into colleges and universities across the United States, and research suggests that they increase student engagement and persistence. Coupling learning communities and service learning provides contexts for learning and deepens students' learning experiences, but it requires adjustments to the organization, management, and planning of activities for the course. This guide contains these chapters: (1) "Service-Learning in Learning Communities"; (2) "Service-Learning and Civic Engagement"; (3) "Service-Learning Basics"; (4) "Assessment of Service-Learning"; (5) "Portfolio Development"; (6) "Portfolio Evaluation"; (7) "Utilizing Case Studies To Link Theory to the Service-Learning Experience"; (8) "Establishing and Maintaining Community Service-Learning Partners"; (9) "Risk Management"; (10) "What Works: Lessons Learned the Hard Way"; and (11) "Leading Change on Campus." An appendix contains seven sample forms that can be used in the learning community and service-learning process. (Contains 4 figures and 30 references.) (SLD)

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Service-Learning and Learning Communities:

Tools for Integration and Assessment

Karen Kashmanian Oates and Lynn Hertrick Leavitt

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Karen Kashmanian Oates and Lynn Hertrick Leavitt

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Preface and Acknowledgments

Preface

After three years of planning the learning community meetings for AAC&U, it became clear that the learning communities and service-learning movements parallel and strengthen each other. Many of the theoretical and practical approaches to learning, including such issues as student voice, participation, collaboration, and community development speak to values shared by both learning communities and service-learning. This publication is our attempt to provide some fundamental theory, best practices, lessons learned, and assessment strategies from our perspective as practitioners. It is our fondest wish for this text to provide our readers the resources to succeed in offering service-learning experiences for their students. The techniques, practices, protocols, and model forms we have provided are examples to draw upon, modify, and, hopefully, spark creativity and imagination.

Acknowledgments

We want to thank the faculty of the Integrative Studies Degree Program in New Century College who through their dedication to developing creative and rigorous learning communities have been a source of inspiration for this publication. We greatly appreciate the administrative and technical support of Nikkia Anderson and Heather Hare in the Center for Service and Leadership at George Mason University.

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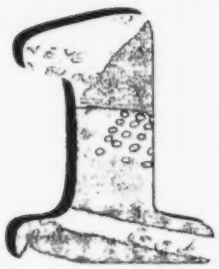


Service-Learning and Learning Communities

In our academic lives, we continually search for ways to make learning more accessible, meaningful, and long lasting. We know from both our experiences and contemporary cognitive research that learning occurs on a number of levels and in a variety of contexts. Today's emphasis on coverage of content, facts, and standardized tests provides the foundation of surface knowledge in a subject area. All too often, however, these facts are devoid of significance. Integrating service-learning into learning communities and evaluating them with assessment strategies that are formative, deepen students' understanding and motivate them to learn more.

Learning communities and service-learning programs present alternative strategies that aim to provide contexts for learning and to deepen students' learning experiences. Learning communities are now commonly structured into colleges and universities across the country, and research suggests that they increase student engagement and persistence. They also improve key liberal learning outcomes.

Learning communities include the following characteristics:

- *Interdisciplinarity*. They combine and integrate subjects generally taught as individual courses.
- *Team Taught*. They integrate two or more faculty or professional staff and their specific perspectives and skills.
- *Theme Based*. They involve rigorous study about complex, capacious contemporary problems and issues.
- *Collaborative*. They promote both faculty and students to learn from each other and encourage student authorship and voice.

Finally, learning communities represent a dynamic learning organization and are thus knowledge creators.

There is extensive literature on learning communities. See, for example, Gabelnick, et al. 1990; Shapiro 1999; and Lenning and Ebbers 1999; and *Peer Review*, Summer/Fall 2001 (special issue on learning communities); and a helpful bibliography at www.evergreen.edu/washcenter/lcbib.htm.

Learning communities take a variety of forms—from one cohort of students simply taking the same set of two to three courses, to more elaborate configurations bringing faculty together with students taking the same courses and living in the same residence halls. All learning communities, however, represent an intentional restructuring of student time and space to foster connections among courses and collaborative work with fellow students and faculty.

The learning community idea is a simple one, adaptable to almost any curricular setting, from programs for underprepared students to honors programs, from first-year and general education programs to study in the major. Many educational leaders have also found learning communities to be ideal structures for deepening and integrating service-learning opportunities into the curriculum.

In support of student learning, it is important to continuously re-examine research, experience, and our teaching practices. In the traditional lecture-style teaching, faculty present information and later test the quantifiable "bits" of information they intended to convey. Service-learning can be—and has been—successfully integrated and assessed in some traditionally structured courses.

When learning communities—involving service-learning or not—are created, the standard for learning and assessment is more complex and rigorous than in traditional courses. This handbook provides insight and information on how these two active-learning approaches (service-learning and learning communities) can work synergistically to provide a deep, rigorous learning experience that can be assessed.

The integration of service-learning into learning communities may seem like a natural progression of our desires to teach in a different way. The shift from passive to active participation for our students and the transformation we as faculty make to develop the active pedagogies of learning communities may take us out of our comfort zone. Adding a service-learning component to the already complicated learning community approach requires an adjustment in the organization, management, and planning of activities for the course. The transfer of control in the shift from lecture to active, collaborative learning is compounded when we integrate an out-of-classroom service-learning experience. It is advisable for faculty to start small, build on what works, and be flexible in adapting to change as the course develops.

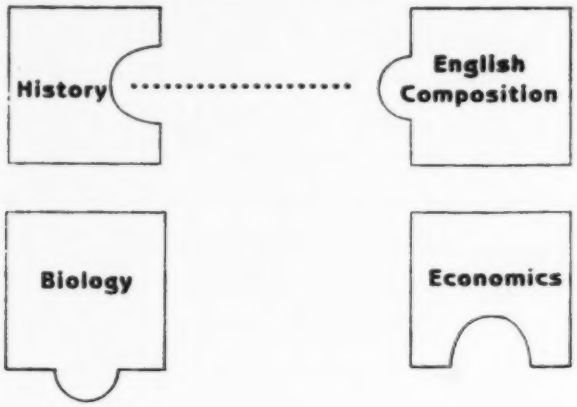
John Dewey (1933) argued that a quality educational experience is judged by whether or not

- the individual grew in intellectual understanding of the subject
- the individual can demonstrate how the subject connects to other disciplines and ways of knowing.

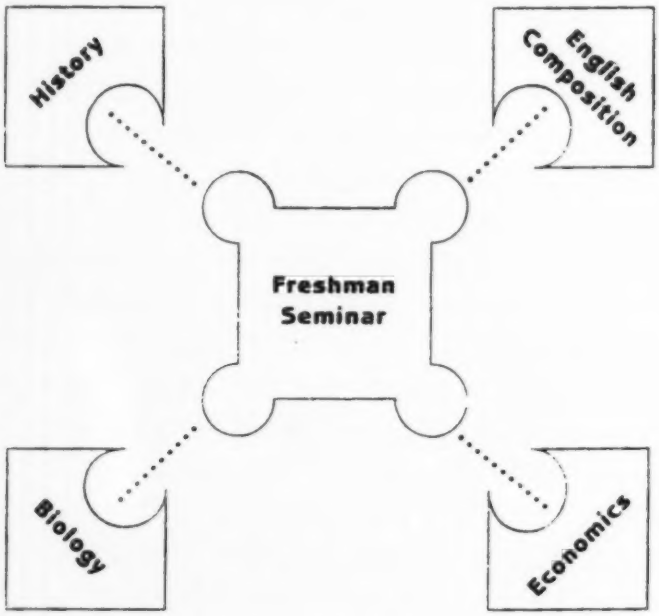
Integrating service-learning into learning communities provides an educational atmosphere that allows for both of Dewey's requirements to be fulfilled. Learning communities offer both a pedagogical philosophy and structural design that enable the integration of a service-learning experience. In terms of pedagogy, learning communities require thinking about classroom dynamics and culture in very different ways from the traditional lecture format that centers almost exclusively on a single disciplinary content area, not the integration and creation of new knowledge. The skepticism that follows new curricular innovation reinforces the need for authentic assessment of learning communities, since the results affect the potential for adoption and dissemination. Learning communities demand a different structural design whereby flexibility and change-by-design can be incorporated; for example, blocks of time are often needed. By definition, learning communities, whether they are in the format of linked courses, freshman seminars, cluster course offerings, or coordinated studies, embrace the spirit of curricular change that links together or integrates courses around themes while enrolling a common group (cohort) of students. Some visual examples in Figure 1 graphically show this.

Figure 1: Learning Community Models

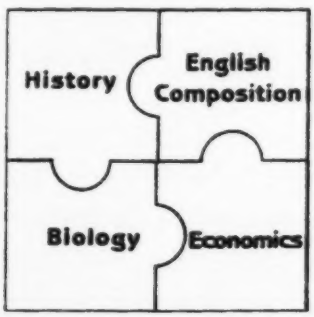
1. Two courses linked together (with cohort of students) and other independent courses (non-cohort) comprise a student's course work for the semester.



2. Four independent courses linked to a freshman integrative seminar as the student's semester offering.



3. Cluster or Coordinated Studies – all courses for the semester linked, with same cohort of students.



Regardless of the structure, learning communities have in common three important elements:

1. They provide an active learning environment.
2. They build community, both academic and social.
3. They connect classroom theory and study to applications in the broader community outside of the classroom.

Each of these three components provides opportunities to integrate service-learning: Service-learning is active, builds community, and provides the means to apply broad concepts in the wider community. Service-learning is one of several active, experiential learning approaches for connecting the classroom to the community. Often referred to as Community Service-Learning, it invites boundary crossing and integration as described by Jeffrey Howard (1993). It also invites the use of progressive, active learning pedagogies for understanding. It is just such an engaged, hands-on integrative approach to learning that the Association of American Colleges and Universities (2002) advocates in its report, *Greater Expectations: A New Vision for Learning as a Nation Goes to College*. In its depiction of an emerging vision for liberal education, Greater Expectations supports both learning communities and service-learning as pathways to deeper levels of engagement and accomplishment for today's students.

By working on community problems, students begin to appreciate the various external and complex environmental influences, such as family values, religion, and community norms that affect social outcomes. As one practitioner puts it,

> Many of our students are searching for the piece that gives them an idea of how they fit into the larger world, the community piece. Much of our energy … is spent giving students the tools to uncover this piece of their life puzzle; to find how they can make our world a more just and peaceful place…In these efforts to make it possible for students to reflect, we encourage them to watch their pieces, the intellect, the social, the spiritual, and the community, as well as other parts of their lives that they are discovering, and to begin to build a whole picture…This puzzle making, to see the vivid colors and share the challenges of searching for the missing pieces, is one of the most exciting and challenging parts of being a part of the Center for Social Concerns.
>
> —*Kathy Royer, Center for Social Concerns, University of Notre Dame*

Service-Learning and Civic Engagement

As an integrative component within learning communities, service-learning contributes to returning higher education to its broader public mission: graduating students for responsible, active citizenship. With a deep understanding of subject matter and multiple perspectives on the social construction of knowledge, learning communities provide an intellectual environment that fosters student voice and active engagement with complex, capacious problems and ideas. Service-learning applies this knowledge in service to broader community needs.

While many colleges and universities make explicit statements about the goal of civic engagement, few have fully incorporated the development of a student's civic character into curricular programs, despite the research that demonstrates the benefits of linking theory and practice to an individual's intellectual growth. Additionally, an overwhelming number of colleges and universities have within their mission statements reference to civic responsibility, without describing how this happens. In *Civic Responsibility and Higher Education* (2000), Zelda Gamson points out the disconnect between university mission statements and their increasing emphasis on research, grants, and graduate studies:

> Colleges and universities need to liberate themselves from the stranglehold of the research culture that has sapped the vitality of most of our colleges and universities.... The domination of the research culture has had negative epistemological, professional, organizational, and cultural effects. In particular, the denigration of applied research and problem solving has eroded higher education's connection to the world. The fetishism of much academic writing—and speech—has contributed to the unintelligibility of academic discourse.

This being said, research will, appropriately, remain an integral part of our training and teaching. But what Gamson warns is that it need not—and should not—*replace* the importance of the undergraduate curriculum, which could be more intensely focused on student voice, activism, civic engagement, and leadership. The tension between research and teaching in higher education is real and dynamic, yet need not be mutually exclusive.

Students arrive at college with energy, aspirations, and a desire to make a difference in their community. The chosen community of a student can range from a sorority or club to a national or international organization. Colleges and universities have the opportunity to provide an environment that fosters civic participation. Access to participation through supported programs, mentor-

ship, and centers such as those for service-learning and leadership or for civic engagement are crucial; they must be prominent and easy to access.

In the seminal work of Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger (1991), the theory of learning based in community participation links deep and contextualized learning as a member of a learning community to participation that applies what has been learned. Lave and Wenger developed the concept of "community practice" that brings together knowledge, learning, and social practice. One of the basic tenets of community practice is the recognition that learning is a process of social transformation that changes the learner's sense of meaning in the world and potential to contribute to the community. An integrative service-learning experience provides the opportunity for students to apply knowledge towards an understanding of community needs and responsibilities and to practice engagement in civic life.

Universities that develop both the infrastructure—such as Centers for Service and Leadership or Centers for Civic Engagement—and the faculty with passion for participation, are healthy, active, and exciting places to work. Engagement of faculty and students around community needs has a profound potential to transform the institution, while providing some of the best educational practices for deepening learning.

Service-Learning Basics

By aiming to provide students with an active, engaged environment for deepened learning and an awakened commitment to community and civic engagement, service-learning is among the most progressive pedagogies. As defined by Jacoby (1996), service-learning is "a form of experiential education in which students engage in activities that address human and community needs with structured opportunities that are *intentionally* designed to promote student learning and development."

Jacoby's emphasis is on the *intentionality* of learning through active engagement with a community and its needs, at the same time recognizing not only students' intellectual development, but also their civic, moral, and ethical development. Service-learning, as one of several experiential education pedagogies, has a philosophy rooted in cognitive learning research, in which meaning is created out of a concern for social, cultural, or environmental needs.

Bringle and Hatcher (1996) define service-learning as "[a] credit-bearing educational experience in which students participate in an organized service activity that meets identified community needs and reflect on course content with a broader appreciation of the discipline and an enhanced sense of civic responsibility." They emphasize joining the academic classroom experience with practical experience in the community. By making the connection between classroom knowledge and their relevant community experiences, students are able to learn more deeply and rigorously. The seminar style and open learning environment found in learning communities enable discussion and reflection for deeper learning. By connecting theory (mind) and practice (body), new knowledge can emerge. Thus, a reflective service-learning experience supports Dewey's critique of "traditional education" that divides mind from body. Further work by Kurt Lewin (1952), David Kolb (1984), Jean Piaget (1968), and Paulo Freire (1970) extends the work of Dewey by suggesting that we use knowledge for our individual and *collective* development.

Experiential education and service-learning philosophies reject the platonic assumption that "truth is independent of knowing and that information can be 'learned' apart from understanding, mastery, and application" (National Society of Experiential Education 1998). As Arthur Chickering (1993) noted: "Every move we make, every emotion we feel, every thought we think, every word we speak involves a network of those interconnections of neurons. The fundamental thing we need to do to achieve learning that lasts is connect the new learning with one of those pre-existing networks." In essence, what we are saying is that experiential education bridges the division of mind and body and, as a consequence, requires a more rigorous set of standards.

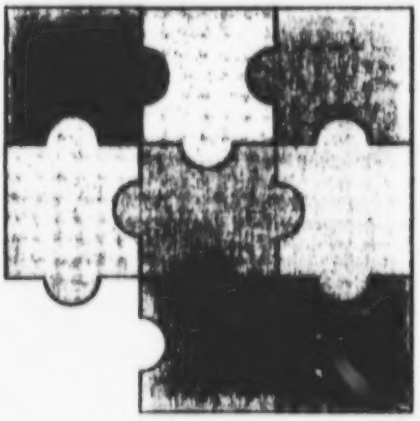
Models created to integrate service-learning into learning communities vary by institution, program goals, faculty interest, and comfort level with developing, evaluating, and assessing experiential focus of learning. Figure 2 describes several different models successfully used throughout the United States that integrate a service-learning component into the discussion and reflection integral to learning communities.

The *variable credit model* is one of the easiest to implement, but it has the least connection to course material. Often, faculty who are striving for a truly integrated model become convinced of the educational merits of service-learning after trying the low risk, variable credit model. Faculty may also find that the *add-on model* benefits some students in a class. With this model, individual students choose to participate in a service-learning option. The *linked model* requires all students to participate but does not require total investment by the course instructor. With this model, much of the reflective practice and assessments is led by student development professionals in the various campus centers created for experiential and service-learning. The *comprehensive integration model* is the most time-intensive, faculty-led model with the highest probability of making lasting connections between theory and practice.

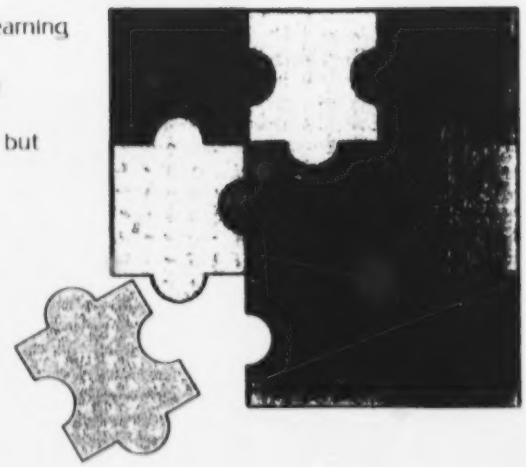
Figure 2: Models for Integration of Service-Learning into Learning Communities

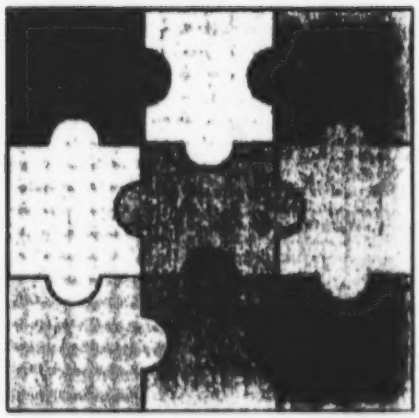
1. Variable Credit Model
   a. Service-learning without specific intentional referencing to curricular material
   b. Assessment responsibility through the Service-Learning Center
   c. Elective course activity for students
   d. Essentially a non-integrative approach to learning in the community

2. Add-On Model
   a. Course may be taken with or without integrating a 1-credit service-learning project
   b. Assessed by the instructors
   c. Faculty involved in planning of projects with Service-Learning Center
   d. Credit awarded to some members of the class, while others do not participate



3. Linked Model
   a. Experience designed by Service-Learning Center with the help of faculty
   b. Assessment responsibility through Service-Learning Center
   c. Minimum input by teaching faculty but linked to lecture material
   d. All students participate





4. Comprehensive Integration Model
   a. Built into the course to link theory and practice
   b. Designed by instructor, service-learning and/or student affairs professional(s) and community agency partner(s)
   c. Totally integrated in class discussions, projects, and assessments
   d. Required of all students participating in the learning community

Learning communities and service-learning programs recognize and pay attention to cognitive and developmental influences on learning. Kolb (1984) describes the process of learning through a cycle consisting of four stages: concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. As individuals travel through this cycle, they are, after engaging in various experiences, provided the foundation to create new concepts and understanding. As each experience is linked to theory addressed in the classroom, new material for learning often emerges from the experience.

Through this cycle, as well as through attention to the context of learning, service-learning and learning-community methodologies are rendered mutually compatible and synergistic. Table 1 describes the nature of the two methodologies in contrast to the traditional lecture style. This table offers a visual tool to identify the synergy and ways of connecting service-learning and learning communities.

Table 1: Learning-Community/Service-Learning Models Contrasted with Traditional Models of Teaching

Service-learning	Coordinated Learning Communities	Traditional Lecture Style
Community centered	Learner centered	Teacher centered
Active participation	Active participation	Passive participation
Team learning (students and community mentors)	Team learning (students, faculty, and community partners)	Individual learners
Community as expert	Teacher(s) as guide(s)	Teacher as expert
Curriculum is derived from experience	Curriculum is continuously negotiated and discovered in the process	Curriculum is set by teacher and existing texts or ideas
Learning from the realities of others	Learning to learn and create knowledge	Prescribed learning
Interdisciplinary	Interdisciplinary	Typically, discipline based
Learning occurs in community	Learning occurs in both classroom and community	Learning occurs in classroom
		Oates and Gaither, 2001

Lessons Learned

Because the pedagogical approaches inherent in service-learning and learning communities build synergistic and supportive mutuality, they are excellent resources to develop a curriculum that requires and promotes active student voice and participation. From our experiences, there are ten lessons learned along the way, based on integrating service-learning into learning communities:

1. Successful service-learning initiatives take advantage of the academic expertise of faculty *and* student affairs professionals, as well as community partners' understanding of student development. All three are essential to a successful service-learning initiative.
2. Within the first weeks of class, students should be given examples of successful service-learning experiences. Discuss with students why they were successful.
3. Throughout the semester, frequent reference to the service-learning projects by the instructor is essential.

4. Academic credit awarded for the service-learning experience must be standardized by time on task *and* learning objectives. The National Society of Experiential Education (NSEE) standard of forty-five hours on site for each academic credit is often used. However, when service-learning is fully integrated into the learning community, standards are adapted to apply to the integrated experience.
5. Approved learning objectives should be articulated by the student in writing and maintained for review when faculty members assess the service-learning experience (see Learning Agreement in Appendix, No 7). For assessment, learning objectives serve as reference points for those who assess the experience.
6. Time should be given to orienting community partners to the academic goals of the service-learning in relation to course content. They should become partners in the evaluation and assessment of students' experiences (see Student and Agency Evaluations in Appendix, nos. 5 and 6). Plan ahead. It takes time to establish good relationships.
7. Faculty must regularly give students opportunities in the learning community sessions to explore connections between theory (book work) and practice (community work).
8. A comprehensive oral presentation, personal journal entries, and a summative written reflection on the relationship of the service-learning experience to course content should be required.
9. A variety of as sessment strategies should be utilized, including video, PowerPoint presentations, storyboards, and reflective portfolios (written or electronic) as methods for students to connect theory to practice.
10. If there is an Experiential or Service-Learning Center, *use it*. They are valuable resources.

These "best practices" from lessons learned will help faculty avoid some common pitfalls as they begin to incorporate service-learning into learning communities. The specific choice of a service-learning project and the model of integration are critical to ensure the desired learning outcomes. In all cases the goal is learning that is connected and deepened as a result of linking classroom instruction and out-of-classroom experience. Several examples of service-learning projects integrated in a learning community are listed in Table 2.

Table 2: Service-Learning Projects in Learning Communities

Learning Community	Specific Course Objective (one of many)	Possible Service-Learning Project
Technical Writing: Expressing Oneself in Business	To learn how to write for an organization	Select an agency that needs a training manual or policy and procedures handbook.
Cancer and Its Impact in Society	To get a better understanding of the medical complications as they affect a patient's daily life	Develop with guidance of social workers a semester-long agenda for the support group guided discussions. Provide logistic and technical support for members.
Energy and Environment	To gain an understanding of how individuals can conserve energy and save natural resources	Provide and present an energy audit in a low-income apartment building followed by a cost analysis for remediation.
Technology Outreach: Bridging the Digital Divide	To learn how organizations make decisions as to why and how they are represented on the Internet	Design and construct a Web site after consulting with personnel at a nonprofit organization..

Assessment of Service-Learning

An integrative service-learning experience is designed to involve students in critical thinking and, by connecting theory to practice, yields enriched understanding. Learning is a "ground breaking" of sorts, requiring some change by the person involved. *Experiential learning* is the process whereby, through the connections and transformation of experience into theory, knowledge is created. The emergence of *service-learning theory* parallels the growth of *cognitive development theory* and *assumes intelligent moral growth*. These educational forms attempt to provide coherence in understanding the unfolding learning experience.

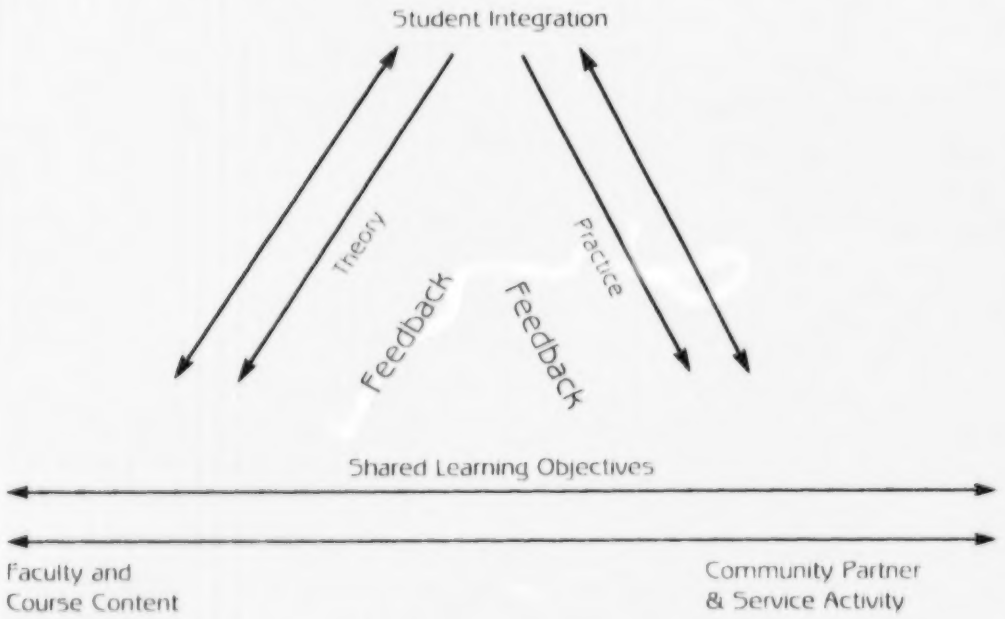
The first step in developing an assessment strategy for an integrated service-learning experience is to match the course learning objectives to both course materials and the service-learning assignment (see Table 2). The service-learning assignment is then built around the desired course objectives, reinforcing and strengthening conceptual knowledge. For example, in a course entitled "Cancer and Society," to better understand the effects of chemotherapy, a student may choose to be present at the time a patient is receiving treatment. During this time, the student will learn not only about the physical effects of chemotherapy, but the emotional and personal impact on the patient and his/her family.

Each time we begin to develop an assessment strategy, we ask three foundational questions:

- How has course content strengthened understanding of the service-learning experience?
- How has the service-learning experience affected students' understanding of course content?
- How has the student demonstrated through reflection on his or her service-learning the ability to integrate theory and practice?

From this preliminary model, three elements—student integration, course content, service activity—are assessed in relationship to their ability to strengthen learning (see Figure 3).

Figure 3: Foundation for Assessment



Oates and Leavitt, 2002

As the active, collaborative, and experiential pedagogy of learning communities combines with the non-traditional learning environment of service-learning, the assessment process becomes more complex. Although Table 3 provides several ideas about how to approach each element, the focus here is on assessment of integration.

Table 3: Assessment of Integration

Materials to Support Assessment of a Service-Learning Experience
• Journal Entries • Evaluations by site supervisor • Group or self evaluation of progress toward goals • Faculty evaluation based on final reflective service-learning paper • Narratives, stories, or case studies from the field
Materials to Support Assessment of Course Content as Related to Learning Objectives
• Traditional tests and quizzes • Video, drama, case study analysis • Papers, poster presentation, PowerPoint
Materials to Support Assessment of a Student's Ability to Integrate Course Content with the Service-Learning Experience
• Reflection • Integrative Reflective Essay • Portfolio Development (written or electronic)

Reflection as a Learning Assessment Tool

Reflection is commonly practiced in both learning communities and service-learning experiences. Reflective writing and oral presentation link theory learned in the classroom to practice experienced in the community, creating new understanding. Many students, staff, and faculty think of reflection only in terms of group sensitivity sessions, with the consequence that they may resist opportunities to reflect on the nature of their service-learning work. This aversion stems from what appears to be a barrier to talking about feelings, thoughts, and emotions. However, reflection is not limited to the release of emotional energy, the sharing of feelings, or attempts to "feel good" about the service-learning experience. Rather, reflection is an opportunity through which experience yields understanding and knowledge; it is decidedly educational. Its formal practice encompasses various formats touching on an endless variety of issues. The reflective process of writing and discussion deepens learning, inspiring new areas of thought and effective action. The benefits of the reflective process reach both the individual and the community.

Being creative with ways that encourage students to think critically about their experience will animate and capture their thoughts, ideas, concerns, and interests. Suggestions to facilitate a deeper understanding of their experience include:

- Create room for many and varied short writing assignments such as journals and essays. Ask students to analyze their service-learning experience through ongoing writing assignments that connect the course material to the service activities.
- Create dialogues among students and with community members and faculty. Enlist community members to lead discussions about the historical, philosophical, economic, political, and sociological perspectives of various community and societal issues. Encourage a broad perspective. Give students a voice and opportunities to participate as conveyors of ideas and facilitators with community members.
- Develop dramatic activities such as theater productions, music, or poetry readings that encourage students to creatively express their experience. Various media in art and sculpture may, in certain circumstances, also be appropriate.

Reflection as a Way of Knowing

Reflection is not a new educational concept. Several theorists developed a conceptual framework to explain how individuals use reflection to learn. According to David Kolb (1984), three researchers who explored the concept of reflection are first, Dewey (1933) who regarded reflection as an important component of education and experiential learning through an intellectual process of developing a hypothesis and testing it through action. Lewin (1947), who supports reflection through peer group discussion, found that much of individual and organizational ineffectiveness results from lack of feedback. He studied the tension between concrete experience and analytical detachment. Piaget (1968) described learning as an integration of concepts and experiences as an individual modifies and fits them together.

Through his theory of experiential learning, Kolb augments earlier ideas of reflection as a way of knowing and learning. The core of Kolb's experiential learning theory indicates how experience is translated into concepts that are used as guides for understanding when engaging in new experiences. According to Kolb, experiential learning—and by extension, service-learning as a

form of experiential learning—is a four-stage cycle that includes concrete experience, observation and reflection, formation of abstract concepts and generalizations, and testing implications of concepts in new situations.

Grundy and Kemmis (1982) provide another theory of experiential learning that includes reflection. They consider the phases of an individual's experiences within a context of a group of autonomous leaders with a common learning objective or purpose. Each person brings to the group information and judgment, and everyone in the group examines and evaluates others' knowledge and ideas. The group may also examine basic assumptions held in common, and then re-examine each person's contribution to the discussion. These phases of reflection may be sequential or simultaneous.

Boud, Keogh, and Walker (1985) developed a model that specifically analyzes the process of reflection. Their model examines reflection from the learner's perspective. In the reflective process, according to their theory, there are three stages. First, *the learner returns to the experience* in his/her mind, remembers what took place and what his/her reactions were to the experience, and attends to his/her feelings about the experience. The second stage is for *the learner to remove obstructive feelings*, whatever needs to be done in order to remove impediments to a thorough, objective examination of the experience. In the final stage *the learner reevaluates* his/her experience. Reflective reevaluation is the most important stage, and the process cannot be complete without the whole cycle.

In the reevaluation stage, the learner covers four processes (Boud, Keough, and Walker 1985). The first is *association*, the process of connecting ideas and feelings of the original experience with those that emerged during reflection with present knowledge and attitudes. The second component in reflective reevaluation is *integration*, an initial process of discrimination. After associations are made, the learner engages in a process of discriminating as to whether they are useful or meaningful. In the third process, *validation*, the learner tests for consistency between the new associations and existing knowledge and beliefs. If there are contradictions between them, the learner must learn how to resolve them and proceed. *Appropriation*, the fourth, is the process in which new information that has been associated, integrated, and validated becomes personalized (appropriated) as part of the learner's identity.

Guidelines for Developing a Formative Reflective Practice

- Link the goals of the reflection directly to course objectives.
- Be clear in articulating how reflective writing helps strengthen both theory and practice.
- Develop a structure within the learning community that allows time for reflection and guided questions.
- Create and distribute a set of goals so that students understand and get the most out of their reflection.
- Find partners: Let others who might better be able to address specific student concerns expressed in the reflection participate in reflective activities.
- Consider the problems that students have underscored in their written reflections; students will feel freer to take risks with their ideas and thoughts if one responds to their needs and encourages them. Prompt and substantial feedback to students is a must.
- Create high expectations for the integration of theory and practice.
- Use evaluation comments as a means to continually improve the practice of reflection.

Appropriated knowledge becomes part of the learner's store of knowledge and values and thus more likely to persist than other forms of knowledge acquisition. With this in mind, it is advisable to establish guidelines and parameters that best meet one's particular needs.

The reflective essay and learning narrative represent two different approaches to encouraging a deeper reflective practice. The *reflective essay* comprises a variety of prompts and questions about the learning experience and the progress students make as they begin to connect theory to practice. The *learning narratives* (vignettes) are less structured and are used more often with students who have achieved some level of sophistication in a non-prompted journal writing assignment. Here, students take the experience beyond the class into a more personal connection to community and public policy. As the learning narratives become more personal, their story as a learner emerges.

The Reflective Essay

One of the most common tools used by faculty to link the action (doing) with meaning (thinking) is the reflective essay. In many cases daily journals that recount activities become the foundation on which to build the reflective essay. One approach leads students from a chronology of what they *did* to a reflection on what it *meant*. A sample outline for reflection represents what has been successfully used to prompt students to look more deeply into their experience.

Journals: Sample Outline for Reflection

1. *Describe what you did at your Community Service-Learning Site today.*
   Today I worked with a small group of slow learners in reading readiness (vocabulary).
   Observation: John sat in his seat studying vocabulary for twenty minutes.
   Interpretation: John has a long attention span.
2. *Describe your reactions to what you did today.*
   I thought that I was successful in getting the children to go over our lessons.
3. *Describe the feedback you received from people you work with.*
   Ms. Smith, the teacher, told me today I was using good communication in talking with the children. I listened to them, showed them that I understood what they said and felt, and told each one of them how nice they were.
   Joyce said that some of the children we both worked with really enjoy the Elephant Word game. This is a game that I invented. That makes me feel really good.
4. *Describe your feelings and attitudes.*
   I think it's wrong for the teacher to yell at the kids for the whole class time.
5. *Describe what you learned.*
   I found that I have to use the progress sheet in my daily lessons or the kids don't say as much.
6. *Describe what you would have changed about today's activity.*
   I ignored Billy today when he spoke to me. It was the first time he had said anything to anyone in three days. Next time I will be more careful.
7. *Include any comments from your sharing meeting.*
   Mr. Jones suggested in one of our sharing meetings that I keep a record of 'the things that work' and 'the things that don't work.' I did that and found that I can see what I'm doing wrong.

Learning Narratives

The following is an example from a course entitled "HIV/AIDS and its Impact on Society," where several student service-learning narratives (vignettes) are used to develop the student's story as learner.

Vignette 1

Friday, February 17 was the first time I drove a person with HIV to the doctor's office. I have to admit I was pretty frightened to come in close personal contact with someone who is HIV positive. What would we talk about? Was it okay to talk about HIV and AIDS? Could I bring myself to touch him or treat him like a human being, rather than a twentieth-century leper?

I arrived at Ricki's house about fifteen minutes late. He stood at the edge of his driveway in a green jacket and using a cane, and I wondered if he needed the cane for some terrible disease that had set in as a result of the virus. I later found out he had been in numerous car accidents and needed to have his hip replaced.

He got in the car and immediately introduced himself. As we drove through the rundown neighborhood, Ricki made a point to wave and shout at everyone we drove past. At first our conversation seemed very superficial. We talked about traffic, school, the weather—you know, all the things you discuss when you have no idea what else to talk about. Then our conversation turned to more personal topics. I talked about religion, my family, etc., and Ricki filled me in on all the places he had traveled and all the drugs he had sold, smoked, shot, and snorted.

We arrived at the doctor's office, and rather than leave him there alone, I tagged along for moral support. We were stared at by everyone that walked by. I guess you couldn't put a stranger couple together—maybe Laurel and Hardy or the Odd Couple. But it was strange, I didn't feel like we were all that different. Sure, we were from different social classes, races, and generations, but we learned a lot from one another in that car ride.

Ricki is still optimistic about living and plans on having a future. He still gets depressed at times, but he said that if he stops living the way he always has, he might as well be dead anyway .... we planned his next doctor's appointment at a time that was convenient for both of us. I hope my other volunteer experiences go as well as this one has.

Vignette 2

Yesterday was my second time driving an HIV infected individual for Northern Virginia AIDS Ministries. Needless to say, this experience was not quite as fulfilling as the first one.

I arrived at a hotel to pick my passenger up. The hotel looked like a place where prostitution and drug use runs rampant. I knocked on the door to room #11. After waiting a couple of seconds, a man, or should I say what was left of a man, greeted me at the door. He weighed no more than 100 lbs, could barely walk, and resembled the children seen on the UNICEF commercials. He invited me in while he finished getting ready. I admit that I was reluctant to enter the room, so I left the door open.... He told me that he had acquired the AIDS virus while in jail. He said that there was nothing he could do while the man held a large knife to his throat. No matter how much education I have received about the virus, the presence of bodily fluids about me still makes me uneasy.

I am not planning on giving up on this project, but I hope that the rest of my encounters are less frightening. As he got out of my car, he called me an angel and said, "God bless you. The best thing would be if He just took me right now." Even though he called me an angel, that is the last thing I felt like.

Vignette 3

I drove Larry this week. He was an older man, I'd say in his mid-forties. He lived with his partner who too had AIDS but was still able to drive. Larry was on morphine drip when I picked him up. It was weird. I'd never seen that before. He said it would go off every six minutes if he wanted it to—and sometimes he did. It must be so hard to be in that much pain at times. He didn't talk much, so I just told him about me and what I was doing. At the office, where the doctors are Infectious Disease Specialists, I found out that many PWA's [Persons with AIDS] go there. I guess I'd never realized that so many different doctors would be needed. But with so many different opportunistic infections, I guess you'd need to have them.... I took him home. He was pretty out of it so, again, not much talk. He replied that he did [need a ride], next week....

Vignette 4

Larry called this afternoon to ask if I could take him to his partner's father's house. I was slammed with work but had trouble saying no. So I finished what I was doing and headed out. Larry was much perkier today and had more to say. It was nice conversation; he is a very intelligent person.... So we talked. He told me he owned his house with his partner, and they took care of his partner's father who had a broken hip. He told me that he takes care of all the financial worries and had some great investment ideas. The trip was short but interesting. I hope to hear from him sometime.

Story as a Learner

Service-learning has helped me understand, in a more in-depth manner, what happens to PWA's throughout the process of the virus. I truly believe in learning by doing. It enhances what I have learned by helping others to understand more thoroughly. I was able to use what I learned in class to help educate people, including ones who were ignorant. I also was able to use my knowledge to inform people as to what they need to do if they thought they might be infected, or if they just had a question to be answered.

This made me feel really good about myself. I found that at first I was insecure and naive about all the facts and didn't know that I could break from the stereotypic ideas I had. The ability to learn about AIDS/HIV in class from many different perspectives (medical, epidemiological, financial, economic, social, and legal) helped me understand the "Whole Person Response" of people infected with HIV. I feel that I best learn by combining an intellectual understanding with personal experience.

Compare your story as a learner to yourself last year before taking the course and having this experience.

I think about my uncle who died in 1992 and how he left his job for the disability checks. He wanted to continue working but didn't want to lose it all in the end. It is amazing how our society

takes advantage of a situation and makes it harder for those involved to be able to do anything.

My most memorable experience is that of Mr. Smith. He was such a spunky man with so much to live for (even knowing that he didn't have much longer). His T-cell count was 5, leading me to believe he wouldn't be around for too long. I think his positive attitude and carefree way of life jived with mine, and it made me open my eyes to see that even with a fatal illness you have things to live for.

As for my personal attitude and opinion, much has changed. I think with a more open attitude and allow myself to see into their lives and not see things from mine. I would talk every night when I got home to my boyfriend about what I had learned, and we would discuss our feelings about different topics that surrounded AIDS. I think that I have opened his eyes more, too. I am surprised when I talk to my mother, who lived with a gay brother. She can be so closed-minded. She has a very negative attitude about gays and AIDS. I hope that I can educate her to be more open and accepting.

I think that what I have learned has enabled me to educate others and myself. My best friend is very sexually active and just moved out to San Francisco. I wanted to make sure she would take the necessary precautions before having sex and know how life-altering AIDS is. I wasn't sure how to approach her, but we started talking about sex one day, and I began to open up. She was impressed with my knowledge and told me she gained a lot of insight from our discussion. I hope that I made an impact in her life because she is one person I would not want to lose to AIDS: AIDS is such a terrifying disease, and I know I will see many more people close to me die from it, but if I can in any way save one life, it will be worth it.

Reading through the reflective essays and learning narratives, the faculty member begins the assessment process by identifying evidence that connects theory, practice, and experience. It is not acceptable for the student to simply write, "I learned a great deal about the health policies of this organization." The statement must be extended to include the ramifications of the policy on the people most affected. This extension may develop by going beyond the core experience to imagining or projecting the impact on individuals or communities and the writer's role.

Depending on the extent to which service-learning is integrated into the learning community, the number of reflective essays or learning narratives will vary. Each time a written reflection is assigned, prompt formative feedback is essential. It is not good practice to wait until the end of the semester or community experience to give students feedback. Faculty comments, advice, and insights can encourage students to more deeply reflect on the experience

No matter which reflective method students use (reflective essays/learning narratives and story as learning), what is important for assessment is attention to and evidence in the writing of those three aforementioned foundational questions:

- How has the course content helped strengthen the understanding of the service-learning experience?
- How has the service-learning experience affected the students' understanding of the course content?
- How has the student demonstrated through reflection on their service-learning the ability to integrate theory and practice?

Portfolio Development

If done correctly with explicit standards and formative feedback, a portfolio is a rigorously designed portrait of an integrated learning experience. In constructing or designing the portfolio, we view the student as owner, creator, designer, and developer, as well as one of the evaluators, of the integration process. We find that the process of developing a successful portfolio is a learning experience in and of itself. In the portfolio, students capture in words or visual images the many snapshots of their experiences over the course of a semester, and then provide an integrative, reflective summary of those experiences to tell the story of themselves as learners. The portfolio can serve as the "house" or "infrastructure" for journal entries, tests, case studies, papers, and site evaluations produced during the course of the integrated service-learning experience. Students often include background information on themselves (a personal narrative), reflection on the site of the service-learning assignment, and an updated résumé.

As one set of researchers put it,

> A portfolio addresses the question "Who am I?" and tells a coherent story of the student as learner. It is a purposeful, integrated collection of students' work that demonstrates student effort, progress, or achievement in one or more areas. The collection includes evidence of student self-reflection and student participation in setting a focus, developing the standards, selecting content, and judging merit. A portfolio communicates what is learned and why it is important. (Paulson, Paulson, and Meyer 1991)

The following list represents several "chapters" or "tabs" we have found useful for students as they construct their service-learning portfolio. One might choose to use this example or model with the recognition that all institutions, faculty, and students will want to personalize their portfolio guidelines. What has worked for us may or may not work for others.

Elements of our portfolios include:

- Title page and table of contents
- Learning community syllabi and information on the service-learning requirement
- Introductory essay, including why the student took this course and personal learning objectives
- Discussion of competencies (if the program is competency based)
- Course materials including selected papers, exams, etc.

- Journal reflections on service-learning
- Reflective, integrative summary of how service-learning experience relates to course theory and content
- Evaluations: Self (Did this experience meet personal objectives?), Site (Was the site of the service-learning appropriate and supportive of learning?), and Supervisor (evaluation of student).
- Bibliography
- Future Directions

With these elements, a rounded portrait of the learner's experience emerges from the disparate parts.

Portfolio Evaluation

Experience over the course of several years has helped form the following rubric and evaluation scheme. This may or may not be applicable to other institutions. However, it can be used as a model for portfolio evaluation work. This rubric was created as a collaborative activity by a faculty team in New Century College at George Mason University. Input from many individuals was solicited before a workable rubric was accepted and standardized by the faculty, and it is under constant revision. We are providing an example of how two of the elements found in our portfolios are evaluated. Evaluation of others follows a similar pattern.

Portfolios are as varied as the individuals who create them; however, each successful portfolio must look at education broadly. The portfolio provides an opportunity to assess student learning in a way that is quite different from traditional methods of quizzes, exams, and reaction papers. Exams and papers alone offer outcomes traditionally valued by isolated, non-integrative teaching experiences; the development of a student portfolio requires the additional rigor of contextualization, application, reflection, and self-critique. The portfolio also allows a faculty to observe students holistically, in a broader context, away from the classroom desk, as they take risks with their ideas, develop creative solutions, learn through critical thinking, and create their own knowledge. For teachers, this is a very rewarding experience. The larger impact is on future learning-community offerings and designs. What faculty learn from the evaluation and reflections on the learning process informs future planning.

Table 4: HCLC 110 Portfolio Evaluation

Student _____ **Seminar Professor** _____

Category	Excellent	Satisfactory
Presentation of materials, appearance, organization, table of contents	☐ visual aspect impressive ☐ creative and/or professional-looking ☐ evidence of considerable time/ thought in organizing/presenting materials ☐ excellent match between table of contents and materials/user-friendly	☐ appearance pleasing/neat ☐ shows evidence of time and effort in organizing/presenting materials ☐ good match between table of contents and materials/user-friendly
Introductory essay (minimum length: 6 full pages with bibliography)	☐ **provides comprehensive/developed picture of learner/effective intro** ☐ is detailed and specific ☐ ideas from course readings are discussed in detail and cited ☐ learning in a variety of course experiences is described specifically ☐ consistently makes insightful connections across course ☐ well-written (attention to writing technique); evidence of careful editing/reading aloud ☐ compelling, interesting, clear	☐ **provides interesting and comprehensive picture of learning; detailed/ good intro** ☐ course readings are used/cited ☐ learning in various course components addressed ☐ makes insightful connections across course experiences ☐ **clearly written with few distracting errors; evidence of editing and reading aloud**
Portfolio as a whole	☐ gives a clear, detailed, reflective and thoughtful picture of learning/ engages in self-evaluation/ memorable/student grasps portfolio concept well	☐ gives a thoughtful picture of learning/ is developed/self-evaluative/very good product/ student grasps assignment well
Required components ☐ attention to NCC* competencies ☐ 1-3 pieces of work for each course theme ☐ samples of work introduced by self-evaluative commentary ☐ revised work (with earlier draft) ☐ Evaluation of tech. skills ☐ info on learn. styles ☐ phase learning ☐ study group eval. (use terms/concepts from Trenholm and group collab. workshop)	☐ competencies are thoroughly discussed throughout portfolio ☐ all required components included/well developed ☐ significant care/thought obvious in the introduction/self-evaluation/ selection of samples of work. ☐ revision constitutes re-seeing/is accompanied by thorough comments ☐ evaluation of learning is especially thoughtful/self-reflective ☐ group evaluation=thorough and specific analysis based on terms/concepts from Trenholm and phase workshop	☐ competencies discussed thoughtfully in several sections ☐ all required components included/developed ☐ conscientious effort obvious thoroughness/engagement in self-evaluation ☐ revision not superficial/accompanied by developed comments ☐ evaluation of learning is thoughtful/ self-evaluative ☐ detailed eval. of study group developed with course terms and concepts

Portfolio Grade _____

Adequate	Unsatisfactory
☐ appearance is neat/organized ☐ table of contents is reader-friendly ☐ materials are not difficult to find	☐ not clear special care has been taken to organize/present materials in particularly professional manner ☐ table of contents not always user-friendly
☐ provides general overview of learning with some detail/good intro ☐ readings mentioned/cited ☐ learning in various course experiences is mentioned ☐ makes connections between/among ideas/experiences ☐ writing generally clear with few distracting error patterns ☐ evidence of editing/reading aloud	☐ picture of learning sometimes vague or undeveloped ☐ insufficient/superficial references to texts ☐ inadequate citation ☐ connections among readings, experiences, etc., rather general ☐ writing needs work
☐ generally clear overview of learning/includes details/self-evaluative/a responsible product/basic grasp of assignment	☐ presents incomplete or inadequate picture of learning and/or of portfolio assignment
☐ competencies are mentioned; some attempt at developing ☐ required components present ☐ student has made effort to be complete and to make a self-evaluation; self-evaluation needs development ☐ revision included along with some commentary; both need further development ☐ there is consistent effort with self-evaluation, but this aspect needs to go deeper ☐ Evaluation of study groups makes some use of course terms/concepts	☐ competencies missing or not developed ☐ some components missing ☐ evidence of self-evaluation inadequate ☐ some effort with revision but process is superficial/explanation of changes insufficient ☐ self-evaluation not developed ☐ study group eval. incomplete; does not use course terms, concepts

NCC-New Century College

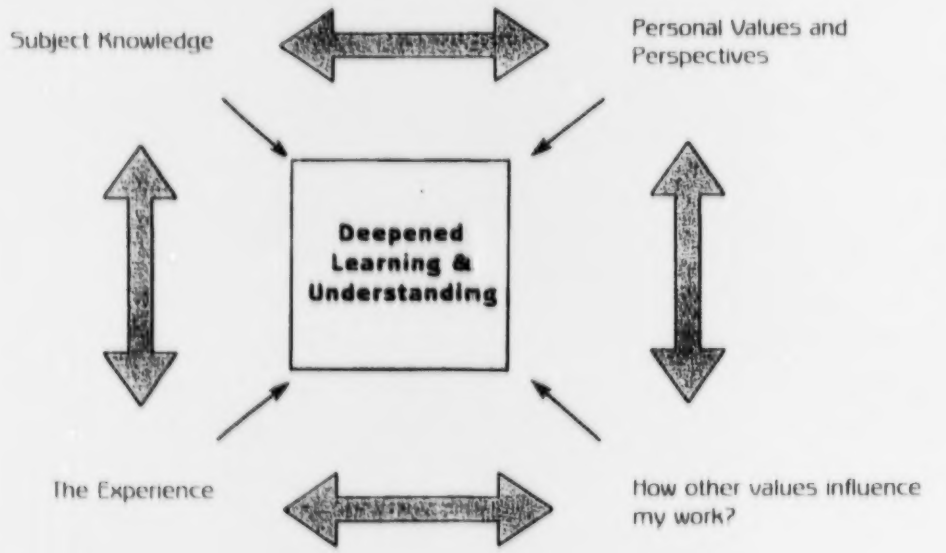
Utilizing Case Studies to Link Theory to the Service-Learning Experience

Case study analysis is a tool that can be utilized to introduce students to the ramifications of making specific decisions. Case analysis is an active learning tool by which students come together with community partners to confront community problems. The power of using cases rests in part on students' ability to understand the material, communicate this understanding and the implications of the decision mode on the subjects in the case. Typically, case studies are used as vehicles to encourage student participation and reflection on decision making as it relates to the application of theory to community practice. Students quickly learn that a decision made in one situation might be very different if the social context only slightly varies; thereby they begin to understand the complexity and implications of decision making.

How to Use Cases

Learning through cases is an intense method for understanding dilemmas and the complexity of situations. Students present cases in the learning community class and the whole class participates. Cases present a dilemma that requires students' critical thinking to resolve. By taking the perspective of different people in the cases, the student digs more deeply and understands the truly interdisciplinary nature of complex social problems. Cases can be used in a variety of ways for a variety of purposes. One way is to identify a student's aptitude and appropriateness for working with certain community partners. How decisions are made, why they are made, the impact of the decisions, as well as the student's approach and ability to work with certain populations, can help faculty find an appropriate community partner. In short, cases should allow the student a simulated *context* to apply knowledge for action.

Figure 4: Synergistic Relationships for Deepened Learning and Understanding



Oates and Leavitt 2002

Where to Get Cases

Experiences serve as the basis for cases. Whenever possible, one can look to the community partner to provide the "real stories," without the decision-making piece. Important, difficult decisions that challenge the "right from wrong" model provide a process strategy allowing both direction and depth in understanding, as well as allowing students to explain and publicly articulate their logic and reasoning. Although many people avoid conflict and disagreements, the case method of study can identify how best to handle conflict when it arises.

Beyond the community service-learning providers, newspaper and journal articles provide material for cases. Commercial text and case handbooks have been written for almost every subject imaginable. Teaching, management, and leadership cases can be found online or through major university schools, colleges, and departments. A quick look through Amazon.com identified thirteen texts on bioethics case studies, 330 texts on leadership cases, more than 2,000 references on education cases, fifty-three on AIDS, five in nonprofit management and eighteen on environmental studies cases.

Although materials available for the case method of teaching are everywhere, using cases correctly and most efficiently requires some study and practice. The following sample outlines present what we have used successfully for student presentation of cases in our learning communities.

Group Case Study Presentation

1. Divide students into groups (usually three or four people per group). To allow all individuals to contribute successfully, there should be a diversity of talent in each group.
2. Give each student in the group the same case study to read.
3. Allow the group to choose a format to present the case. Common presentation formats include debates, panel presentation, theatrical presentations, and enactments.
4. Many cases require research before they can be presented. Divide research work among group members. Give enough time to prepare library work and meet with experts, if appropriate.
5. Stand back and watch the interaction.
6. Walk around, watch, and listen to the groups.
7. Provide a written reflection exercise to record student reactions and learning experience.

Individual Presentations with Group Feedback

1. Give time for each student to read over the case.
2. Ask students, "What is the underlying problem?"
3. List five solutions to this problem. Then rank the solutions from 1 to 5, with one being the first choice.
4. Share the list of solutions with a neighbor. Through sharing, can another possible solution be added?
5. Re-rank and re-state solutions.
6. If the person in one's case study chooses the Number 1 solution, what are the ramifications? Think about the legal angle or problems, psychological, medical, family, and government angles. How does this solution affect others in the case?
7. List three reasons someone might not agree with one's decision.

The following narrative presents a case study written by Professor Virginia Montecino of New Century College, representing a problem that occurred when one of her students experienced difficulty completing a service-learning assignment. This case was written for faculty development and discussion about some of the dilemmas faculty face as they integrate service-learning into learning communities. Professor Montecino provides background and questions for faculty to consider and an example of how to use cases for faculty development as well as student learning.

Example of a Case

Technology Outreach: Bridging the Digital Divide

In my course that deals with Internet literacy (critiquing the Internet, exploring economic, social, legal, ethical aspects of the Internet, and publishing course work on the Web), one option for students to fulfill their service-learning requirement is to help people bridge the digital divide by volunteering at non-profit community-based computer learning centers. My students who choose this option help young people learn computer skills: using e-mail and word processing programs, researching on the Internet, doing basic Web publishing, playing computer games that can reinforce skills in following directions, building hand/eye coordination, building skills in math, reading, art, etc.

The students' experiences in performing this service can be greatly enhanced or diminished by the level of support they get from the supervisor of the individual non-profit learning center. Students' impressions can range from, "The supervisor really appreciated my help and went out of his/her way to show me how I could help," and/or "The supervisor let me design ways to help the students learn technology skills," to "I went to the site at the agreed- upon time, and the doors were locked." Though the latter scenario is not common, a few students who started this type of learning experience with good intentions ended up without a venue for performing this service because of understaffed centers and poorly trained staff.

One student, in particular, came to me very upset because the center to which she was assigned was closing. It had lost its supervisor, and it was too late for the student to sign on at another site. She did not have the required forty-five hours. So that I would not impose a solution on the student and to help her enhance her own problem-solving skills, I asked her to brainstorm about possible ways she could complete her hours, while, at the same time, fulfilling her original intention—to help young people bridge the digital divide. I asked her to e-mail me her possible solutions.

She came up with:

- Doing research on educational sites for children
- Creating a Web site.

We then talked about how we could combine her ideas to make this a fulfilling project. The skills she was learning in class included researching and evaluating Web sites and Web publishing, so that her ideas for an alternative project were a perfect fit. After we discussed possible ways to combine these ideas, the student decided to create a Web "booklet" for students. I suggested she provide a print version that could be copied and placed in the computer learning centers, and a Web site version so that she could practice her Web skills and learn how to link the various components of her book, using hypertext. I also suggested she divide the book into different age groups and categories of activities, such as:

- Games online
- Children's Museums online
- Educational Activities

Her hours were earned by:

- researching Web sites with games, children's museums, and educational activities.
- evaluating the Web sites for credibility of sponsoring organization, age appropriate activities, suitability of material (no violence, or inappropriate language or graphics).
- creating the print and Web versions of the booklet.

This re-visioning of the experiential learning project turned out to be a success, perhaps even more successful than the original plan. The student learned valuable life and work skills, such as problem solving, publishing for a particular audience, assessing the value of materials, and enhancing Web publishing skills. Along with helping students learn more about the Internet and build on other skills, the "booklet" also served as a resource for parents, identifying places to take their children on the Internet for safe and fun games and educational activities.

Questions Faculty Use to Prompt Problem Solving

This case demonstrates that flexibility and a willingness for faculty and students to problem solve together is critical to a learning experience. The following represents the questions the faculty member asked the students in order to help problem solve a workable solution. The italicized questions from faculty are followed by real student responses.

How could the problem have been avoided?

Though I had met with the director of the computer centers and had even had her come to the class to explain the program, I could have had better coordination with the local site supervisor. I assumed the manager of the program would coordinate with the individual learning center supervisors. That did not happen.

What can be done in the future to prevent this from happening again?

- Better coordinate with the local computer center supervisors.
- Have students and the supervisor sign the student's contract of responsibilities and dates of service.
- Try to head off problems early on by having students:
  - — submit a brief weekly report (for example, e-mail, Web-based forum, print copy) on how things are going.
  - — dialogue in class about how things are going.

How to situate the experience so that the student can transfer the problem-solving skills to other situations?

- include the transfer of such skills in the in-class dialogue and in their reflective essay that discusses the learning experience.

In the required reflective essay for all students, the faculty prompts reflection with the following set of questions:

- What do you think was the most successful aspect of this experience for you, and why?
- What do you think was the most successful thing you were able to do for your client(s) and why?
- Sometimes we learn more from our mistakes. If you were doing this over again, what are some things you could do to make the experience more successful?
- What technology skills did you have that you were able to contribute?
- What technology skills did you *learn* or *build* on from doing this project?
- What other experiences as part of this project enhanced your learning and knowledge base?

Establishing and Maintaining Community Service-Learning Partners

To succeed in integrating service-learning into a learning community curriculum, one must establish a dedicated group of community partners who can contribute to the educational process. Most non-profit organizations and community agencies rely heavily on volunteers and understand the many facets of what volunteers contribute. However, to guard against disaster and disgruntled faculty and student participants, it is important that agency workers, volunteer coordinators, and supervisors understand the difference between a "volunteer" and a "service-learner." Specifically, service-learners may need more guidance and mentoring compared to volunteers, so that community partners' time commitment—time that is at a premium—is often greater.

Successful relationships with community agencies begin through an orientation program. Each college or university needs to devise an individual plan for implementing an orientation program based on human and other resources, but the following should serve as a template of how to accomplish this task

Orientation

One of the first questions to consider is timing: When is the most appropriate time to orient the community partners to the university's service-learning objectives? Most often, orientations that are held prior to the fall semester prepare non-profit organizations and community agencies for both fall and spring placements. Likewise, an early January session may serve to include those agency coordinators new to their jobs and/or those who had been on vacation when the summer orientation was held.

During the orientation, it is important to give community agencies an idea of how service-learning fits under the umbrella of experiential learning. A definition of service-learning should include a discussion about how service-learning differs from volunteering, internships, co-ops and other forms of experiential education (Eyler and Giles 1999). Examples of forms, such as those covering learning agreements, risk, student evaluations, and site evaluations should be distributed and reviewed to familiarize agencies about what to expect. (Sample forms can be found in the Appendix.)

An effective component of the orientation program is the construction of a panel of experienced partners consisting of at least one faculty member, a community agency representative, and a student. This interactive method of training enables participants to hear various perspectives on

how service-learning works. After panel members discuss their roles and experiences, ample time is needed for questions so that the participating partners get the opportunity to interact with the panelists in a group forum. Often, one participant has a question that addresses another agency's need, and everyone in the orientation has a chance to help problem solve and learn from each other.

A major goal for the orientation session is to reinforce for the community partners the idea that service-learning is very different from volunteering. Moreover, community partners learn the importance of their role as the on-site faculty member. Additionally, community partners serve as guides and mentors to the university students in helping them design meaningful and challenging experiences. Finally, agency representatives learn how to prepare learning goals as both guides for work and criteria for student evaluation. Agencies should be aware that students also complete an evaluation of their on-site experience (form included in the Appendix, no. 5). We have found it is common for students who have quality experiences to continue serving the agency in a volunteer role, and, possibly, as future employees at the agency.

As part of the orientation, benefits to the community agency representatives should be highlighted so that participants understand that hosting service learners can be a positive experience for their own agency, as well as for the student, faculty member, and college or university.

A sample schedule for a Community Service-Learning Partners Orientation is shown below.

Orientation for Service-Learning Partners

8:30	Registration & Continental Breakfast
9:00	Welcome & Introductions
9:15-10:00	A Review of the Basics • What is service-learning? • Learning Agreements/Paperwork • Reaching GMU's service learners
10:00-11:00	Service-Learning in Practice Panel (Include: faculty, director of the Center for Service and Leadership, students and community partners)
11:00-11:15	Break
11:00-12:00	Question and Answer Session

Continuous Support

After the initial orientation, in order to sustain good partnerships and experiences for students, continuous support for the partners is essential. Ongoing support can be as simple as follow-up telephone calls from the faculty or from the Center responsible for service-learning. When appropriate, it is also advisable to include the community partners as guest lecturers in the course. In some cases, an entire class may select, over an entire semester, only three or four agencies with which to work. This offers the possibility for "field trips" to the sites by all of the students to occur at the same time for special events at the agencies.

Continuous support may also occur in a more indirect way, if students continue association with or become employed by the agency after their service-learning is complete. If they had good experiences as student learners, alumni become loyal patrons and mentors for the next generation. Moreover, students who become employees of community agencies increase ties between the institution and the community and decrease the town/gown conflict or "ivory tower" reputation of higher education institutions. Community agency employees are also wonderful resources as partners for faculty interested in community-based research and exploring grant possibilities. New and exciting grant opportunities are available for partnerships, especially when public schools and nonprofit organizations collaborate.

Evaluation

The third key ingredient to establishing and maintaining community service-learning partners is a formative evaluation of the service-learning experience. Evaluation ideally takes place on three levels: evaluation of the student's service-learning experience by the agency, evaluation of the agency by the student based on the learning experience, and evaluation by the faculty member about the student's learning and the integration of that learning into course content (Fig 3).

In order to maintain positive relationships with agencies that serve as community service-learning partners, all parties must be willing and able to communicate on a regular basis. If one of those parties is, for whatever reason, not willing or able to maintain the link with the other parties, a less-than-ideal situation may occur. Along the way, it is normal to hit several bumps in the road.

Evaluation of the student by the site supervisor at the agency is often used as part of the final grading process, and the evaluation should be placed in the student's portfolio. This evaluation gives the student feedback on how s/he applied the course theory in service to agency practice. It provides both the student and site supervisor a chance to discuss both success and areas for improvement in the student's job performance. It is critical that the student's site supervisor regard this exercise as an opportunity for enabling the student to learn and develop. Closure in the form of an exit evaluation is important for the service provider as well as the student. Ideally, however, the site supervisor will not use the final evaluation as the only time or method for feedback. When poor student evaluations are repeatedly received from an agency, a site visit is recommended. During the site visit, it is important to discover whether the match of student expectation and agency goals is compatible.

Evaluation of the agency and supervisor is the second level of assessment (sample form in Appendix, no. 5). The student evaluation of the supervisor should focus on what was learned from the experience, not whether or not s/he "liked" the immediate supervisor. In this regard, faculty should be aware that students are at different personal and professional developmental levels. For some students this may be their first work experience outside the classroom. Others may previously have held paying jobs but had never provided service without compensation. Some students get caught up in evaluating the aesthetics of the site (or its lack) and the personalities of their co-workers. Students should be encouraged to focus on and evaluate what they learned and how it integrates into the course content.

The third level of evaluation is that of the student by the faculty member and focuses on the *depth of learning* the students convey based on their reflections. While providing information to assess the final grade earned by students is the collective responsibility of the three partners (faculty, student, and the agency), it is the faculty's responsibility to make the final determination through integrating all the material provided.

When appropriate, it is beneficial to get permission from the students to share their reflections with the community agency. These reflections can be used by the community agencies to develop and modify learning objectives for future students.

Establishing and maintaining positive relationships with community agencies is essential to the success of integrating service-learning into the curriculum, whether used as an "add-on" or "comprehensive integration" model. It may seem a daunting task to begin, but if one starts small (only a few organizations/agencies), garners resources from around campus (Center for Experiential Education/Service-Learning, Center for Service and Leadership, Student Activities), and engages students and site supervisors in the process, the burden is shared and the results are tremendously rewarding. Colleges/universities and community agencies both reap the benefits and rewards from engaging students in service-learning experiences.

Risk Management

As faculty, students, and community agencies begin to work collaboratively, issues such as risk management and liability arise. Risk management is an essential component of all service-learning experiences. When students are sent into communities as part of the requirement for a course, faculty, students, and community agencies must understand and accept that risk is involved.

Our strategy for developing risk management guidelines for service-learning experiences in learning communities was rather straightforward. First, we met with the university risk management office and consulted legal affairs in order to develop a *Risk Release Form* for students and faculty to sign, along with a *Letter of Understanding* and *Service-Learning Agreement* for agencies to review and sign (sample forms in Appendix, nos. 1, 3, and 7).

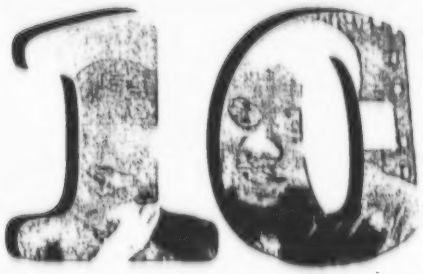
Faculty are encouraged to *discuss and distribute forms* on the *first day* the learning community meets. All students are required to complete the form prior to beginning a service-learning experience. *Letters of Understanding* are sent to new agencies and collected before the semester begins. Either the learning community faculty member or experiential/service-learning administrator on campus can collect and track these Letters of Understanding and send *Evaluation Forms* at the end of the semester.

No form can guard against all possible mishaps when students are engaged in experiences outside of the classroom, but as legal documents they can be helpful if something out of the ordinary happens while students are completing their required service-learning experience.

Prior to beginning their service-learning experiences, students are strongly encouraged to have *health insurance*, even if it is temporary. Some colleges and universities require students to carry health insurance, while others do not. If students do not have health insurance, purchasing the university's student health insurance policy is strongly recommended and, depending on campus policy, may be required. We have discovered that inexpensive, temporary health insurance is available for our students. Checking with another experiential program, such as the Study Abroad department, may be helpful in order to identify inexpensive, temporary health insurance options.

Our institution has a requirement that community agency partners carry *volunteer insurance*. If an agency does not have volunteer insurance, we diplomatically let them know that for risk and legal reasons, agencies without such insurance cannot be part of our official community partners list and Web site. Establishing and enforcing guidelines protects and supports the students, faculty, and community partners in the unlikely event that a mishap occurs during the service-learning experience.

Each college or university has its own method of dealing with risk management and legal issues. Knowing one's institutional polices and procedures is vital to the success of integrating service-learning into learning communities.



What Works: Lessons Learned the Hard Way

When planning this chapter, we decided to stay away from the often over-used and presumptive title of "Best Practices." In fact, best practices could be quite different from institution to institution. Although we might strive to achieve the *best* practice possible for student learning, we often fall back on *good* practices that, when implemented, have a history of success. These good practices give us motivation to grow—a chance to fine-tune our way of thinking and get us closer to best practices for student learning.

Our collective experiences have led to the construction of the following list of "what works" when designing and integrating service-learning experiences into learning communities. These guidelines may help others create a more effective experience for students.

- *Plan in advance*, at least three to six months prior to the start of classes. Identify a variety of community partners who have the capacity and desire to provide a rich learning environment for students.
- *Provide an orientation* for both students and community partners. Students need to understand the community partner's mission, and the community partners need to understand the teaching and learning goals of the learning community. A Community Service-Learning Fair held during the first few weeks of class has been successful in matching students with service-learning sites.
- *Put in writing* the desired objectives and outcomes of the experience and clarify the responsibilities of each person involved (see service-learning agreement form in Appendix, no.7).
- Provide students a foundation of both work ethics expected at the site and *understanding of confidentiality* issues prior to the service-learning experience.
- During the semester, consistently focus on the *interrelationship* between the disciplines and the nature of interdisciplinary learning in order to demonstrate in a holistic manner the integrative nature of knowledge and our understanding of human behavior and decision making.
- *Communicate*, communicate, communicate how things are going from the perspective of student, faculty, and service-learning partner.
- Provide time in class for oral and/or written *feedback and reflection*. Give students a voice in their experience.
- Require a *standardized comprehensive assessment instrument* (e.g., portfolio) from all students.
- Provide all stakeholders with information including *risk management*.
- *Develop a culminating event*—a day of celebration for the work done and connections made.

Leading Change on Campus

To lead: To guide on a way; to advance; to direct on a course or in a direction

Integrating service-learning into learning communities, when maintained as an isolated, sporadic innovation found in one program or department on campus, prevents recognition of it as a valued component of work in curricular development. Our goal is to create an institutional culture where service-learning and learning-community pedagogies are understood and valued by peers, administrators, community stakeholders, and students. Like any new innovation, the stakeholders must continuously communicate and collaborate. Like the innovation itself, this requires energy and commitment for sustainability.

On any campus, leading change efforts can be both complicated and time consuming, but these efforts are a necessary prerequisite to institutionalizing an innovation as well as to creating a culture of acceptance where growth of the initiative can occur. Since many of us are either ill suited to lead change or lack the skills and knowledge to make change, faculty development plans that encourage and provide faculty an opportunity to engage in a study of change and learn the needed skills to effect it are invaluable.

As we began the systemic institutionalization of integrating service-learning into our learning community curriculum, there were three guiding features of our work. First, we started small. We started with a pilot project. Our advice is to initiate one or two "experiments" which have potential for success. It is important to design the first projects for success. Second, find self-reinforcing processes. Discover what works for one's institution and build on it. Let a successful project be the foundation for more successful projects. In the initial states of implementation, develop the team's stake in the project. And, finally, be pragmatic so that those involved can identify how the change can benefit something they are personally invested in. This may be student retention, social justice, increased connection to classroom material, more majors, etc. In every project we have initiated, those three guiding factors have paved the way for change.

Our method for initiating a new pedagogical approach to student learning is systematic and mindful of the following six "elements" created and modified from the work of John Kotter (1996). These elements are not performed in a linear sequence, but are overlapping, dynamic, and reinforcing. As leaders in the change process, we are mindful that change does not occur without specific and intentional attention to the following:

1. *Establish a sense of urgency* and identify what will be won and lost if one does not initiate the change. In our case, we focused on the potential for integrating service-learning into learning communities to meet our students' learning objectives. Other objectives could be based on retention issues, the need to increase majors, etc.
2. *Create a small coalition* of faculty, student affairs professionals, community members, and students who have the ability to link theory with practice, knowledge with skills, and student satisfaction with retention.
3. *Communicate the success stories*, using every vehicle possible to let others know what one is doing, how it connects and supports the university mission and faculty members' professional and personal goals. Link the integrative service-learning experiences to democracy and social justice objectives, which are almost universally mentioned in universities' public mission or vision statements.
4. *Generate and celebrate short-term wins*. Create the best possible environment for success. When it is achieved, celebrate with those who have made it happen. Publicly recognize and reward the people who make those wins possible. Articulate the connection between new service-learning initiatives and individual success and recognition.
5. *Empower* faculty and professional staff to affect change. If training and faculty development programs are not in place for those who want to do something very different, then initiate such programs as a continuous activity. Without the right skills and attitude, people feel powerless.
6. *Build for the future*. It is not enough to have a small, seasoned, mature, coalition. Be mindful of the younger faculty who must continue the efforts of change. Create or develop the next generation of academic leaders by putting in place reward and recognition systems aligned with such endeavors, especially in relation to promotion and tenure.

Oates and Leavitt (2002) Modified from Kotter (1996)

There are no guarantees. However, following these guidelines for change will be a significant help with integrating a service-learning approach in the curriculum. Leading this change and campus acculturation go hand-in-hand with the work of pedagogical innovation that make the integration of service-learning in learning communities a success for student learning.

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APPENDIX, No. 1
Risk Assessment and Release

SAMPLE

George Mason University

To: Students enrolled in Service-Learning Courses

From: Assistant Director, Center for Service and Leadership

Re: Risk Assessment and Release

Date: _____

The purpose of this memorandum is to inform you of certain risks and responsibilities that you will be assuming as a student in the above classes. This is a unique course based on service-learning. I must bring to your attention some of the potential dangers that you may encounter during this program. Although designed to enhance your general education, participation in this course is entirely voluntary. George Mason University's role in this program is primarily to facilitate its organization. The University is not a tour agent or tour promoter. This is to be returned to the Center for Service and Leadership before you begin your service.

I. RISKS AND DANGERS

There are the normal dangers found in any type of off-campus activities including, but not limited to, transportation delays or accidents, victimization by criminal activity, and illness. As a student volunteer you will be working with the staff of various agencies, non-profit service organizations and associations in the Washington, D.C and Northern Virginia area. The service work could encompass activities such as food preparation, tutoring, street outreach, coaching, fund raising, educational programming, conference planning, developing public relations materials and other needed tasks as assigned by the volunteer supervisor. You may be counseling and/or assisting victims of violence, seniors, people with emotional, mental and/or physical disability. You may be working with criminal offenders. Physical work may include (but is not limited to) cleaning, lifting, hauling, climbing ladders, and may involve using hand tools. Please be aware that by participating in these activities you may potentially increase your exposure to contagious medical diseases such as HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, Hepatitis, etc. Please consider these risks and dangers carefully before deciding to continue with this course. There will be "on-the job" training and/or orientation session provided by the organizations and agencies you are serving. I urge you to pay careful attention to their orientations and follow their instructions closely. **Please initial here to indicate that you have read and fully understand this paragraph: _____ .**

II. TRANSPORTATION

George Mason University assumes no responsibility or liability for any injuries to your person or property caused by the acts or omissions of others during transportation. Further, George Mason University makes no recommendations or guarantees as to any transportation providers you may deal with in making your arrangements. To protect yourself from these types of losses, you may wish to purchase appropriate insurance.

III. AGENCIES, ORGANIZATIONS AND ASSOCIATIONS

George Mason University and the Center for Service and Leadership offer the organizational lists solely as a public service to the members of the university community. The University and the Center for Service and Leadership makes NO REPRESENTATIONS OR RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING THE AGENCIES AND ORGANIZATIONS LISTED. Unless expressly noted, the organizations listed are fully independent of the University. Further, George Mason University and the Center for Service and Leadership ASSUME NO RESPONSIBILITY OR LIABILITY, for personal or property injuries resulting to the student or for damages caused by the student, resulting from the student's participation in the activities of these organizations outside of professional duties assigned by the organization.

IV. HEALTH INSURANCE

a. Students are responsible for providing their own health insurance.
b. Students are responsible to check with the organization and/or agency to find out if they provide any insurance or liability coverage for their volunteers.

V. RELEASE AND WAIVER

By signing this form you are acknowledging that you have been informed of some of the risks and responsibilities involved in this program and that you knowingly assume them. **By signing this form you also agree, for yourself, your heirs and assigns, to release and hold harmless George Mason University, its employees and agents, from any legal claim or liability for any bodily injury and personal property damage that is caused to you by the negligent act or omission of George Mason University, its employees and agents, while you are participating in the program.**

Signed: _____

Print Name: _____

Course Name & Number: _____

Date: _____

If the participant is under 18, a parent or legal guardian must also sign.

Signed: _____

Print Name: _____

Date: _____

last revised: December 11, 2002

APPENDIX, No. 2
Partners Application

Partners Application **SAMPLE**

[Center for Service and Leadership Logo here]

2002-2003 Service-Learning Partners Application

Organization Name: _____

Address: _____

_____

Name of Contact: _____ Title: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____

E-mail: _____ Web Address: _____

Mission Statement:

_____

_____

_____

1. Has this organization provided service-learning placements for GMU students before?
   ☐ YES ☐ NO

2. How many service-learners can this organization accommodate?
   _____

3. How many hours can this organization provide a semester (15 weeks long) per student?
   ☐ 45 ☐ 45-90 ☐ 90-135 ☐ more than 135

4. Is this organization accessible by public transportation? ☐ YES ☐ NO
   ☐ Fairfax Cue Bus ☐ Within walking distance from Fairfax Campus
   ☐ _____ Metro ☐ Other _____

5. Does this organization provide volunteer insurance for service-learners? ☐ YES ☐ NO
   **Note: It is recommended that all students be covered by the organization's insurance.*

6. What types of work will service-learners perform? Please describe briefly and attach job descriptions.
   _____

   _____

   _____

7. Please describe the supervision the service-learner will receive.

_____

_____

Organization Requirements:

1. What is the minimum age requirement?_____

2. Is there a minimum time commitment? If yes, please explain the expectations.

_____

_____

3. Days/Hours when service-learners are needed:

_____

4. Is previous experience in a related area required? Are you seeking special skills?
   If yes, please describe:

_____

5. Is orientation/training required? ☐ YES ☐ NO
   If yes, please describe and provide a schedule of training classes.

_____

6. Can the organization accommodate student groups?

_____

Please check one (1) category that best describes your organization's primary focus.

☐ Arts & Culture	☐ Children/Youth	☐ Computer/Technology
☐ Conflict Resolution	☐ Disabilities	☐ Education/Literacy
☐ Environment/Animals	☐ Gay/Lesbian Issues	☐ Health
☐ HIV/AIDS	☐ Homelessness/Hunger	☐ Human Services
☐ Immigrants/Refugee Assistance	☐ Legal/Victim	☐ Mental Health
☐ Nonprofit/Business Management	☐ Recreation	☐ Senior Citizens
☐ Women		

☐ I would like for our opportunities to be posted on CSL's volunteer list as well as Service-Learning Partners list.

Additional Comments:

_____

_____

_____

_____

APPENDIX, No. 3
Letter of Understanding

SAMPLE

Letter of Understanding

The purpose of this Letter of Understanding is to set forth the provisions under which George Mason University (GMU) students will perform an experiential learning project at your organization. This project is part of a course and the students involved are considered to be agents of the Commonwealth of Virginia while carrying out their assigned duties and responsibilities.

Organization Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____

E-mail _____ Web Address: _____

1. The GMU point-of-contact is the Assistant Director, Center for Service and Leadership and the organization point-of-contact is _____
   These persons will be responsible for overseeing the student's project and resolving any problems that may arise. In addition, GMU will assign a faculty advisor who will oversee the student's coursework and in-class assignments. Your organization will assign a qualified person to mentor the student while performing the project.

2. Each student assigned by GMU will be given a written job description and list of instructions that will include specific duties and responsibilities. Inasmuch as the students are neophytes in the field, they should not be expected to perform assignments not specified.

3. There should be no exchange of funds between GMU and your organization with regard to the placement of a service-learner. Your organization will furnish all equipment and supplies required for the project. Any purchases for uniforms or personal items will be funded by the student.

4. Students performing experiential learning projects have liability insurance coverage under the State's Risk Management Plan for simple, negligent acts arising out of their assigned duties and responsibilities. This coverage does not extend to illegal or willful acts. Nor does this insurance coverage extend to the operation of your organization's vehicles. The Risk Management Office at GMU will provide a Certificate of Insurance upon request (phone _____).

5. Any medical expenses associated with the experiential learning will be funded by the student. In the event of an illness/injury that occurs on-site, it will be appreciated if your organization provides first-aid treatment as appropriate.

6. George Mason University wants to express its appreciation to your organization for agreeing to provide an experiential learning site for its students. In this way, the student will be able to try out the principles and practices learned in the classroom. We hope that this will be a mutually worthwhile venture.

I have read this form and agree to the items listed above.

_____	_____
CSL Assistant Director Signature	Organization Point-of-Contact Signature
Phone: _____	Phone: _____

APPENDIX, No. 4
Supervisor's Evaluation of Service Learner

SAMPLE

Supervisor's Evaluation of Service-Learner

Student Name: _____

GMU Course: _____

Agency Name: _____

Supervisor's Name: _____ Phone Number: _____

Number of Hours Completed by _____: _____

Please complete this evaluation for the student listed above. Your comments will be considered in preparing the student's final grade. Additionally, any suggestions you have for making this program more effective for your organization will be very helpful for us to plan future learning experiences for GMU students.

Please return by _____ to the Center for Service and Leadership, (include address, phone and fax number). Please feel free to contact our office for any additional comments or questions.

1. How seriously did the student take their responsibilities? Please comment on attendance, work habits, and professionalism. Do you have any suggestions for improvement?

   _____

   _____

2. What contribution has the student made to your organization?

   _____

   _____

3. If you were to grade this student on overall performance of assigned duties and willingness to learn new ideas and skills, what grade would you give?

   ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ F

   Why? _____

   _____

4. After working with a service-learner this semester, do you feel that your organization is able to provide students with an experience that enhances their coursework? Why?

_____

_____

_____

5. Is your organization interested in hosting another service-learner next semester? ☐ Yes ☐ No
If no, why not?

_____

_____

_____

6. What questions do you have about the Service-Learning Partners program?

_____

_____

_____

PLEASE RETURN BY _____ to

Center for Service and Leadership

Address

Phone

Fax

APPENDIX, No. 5
Student Evaluation of Service-Learning

SAMPLE

STUDENT EVALUATION OF SERVICE-LEARNING

To be completed by student at the end of his/her service experience.

Course: _____ Community Agency: _____

Number of Hours served: _____ Site Supervisor: _____

1. Why did you decide to participate in this service-learning experience?
   - ☐ because I am interested in social issues
   - ☐ to earn extra credit
   - ☐ to link theory learned in the classroom with actual field experience
   - ☐ to volunteer
   - ☐ other reason(s) _____
   - ☐ course requirement

2. What is the most important thing you learned from your service experience?

   _____

   _____

3. Do you think that community service is a valuable and appropriate learning component within this course?

   ☐ Yes ☐ No

4. Are you going to continue to work with your site placement?

   ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ I don't know

   If so, Why?

   _____

5. Did your experience help you to gain a better insight into the material and concepts of the course? Please explain.

   _____

   _____

   _____

6. In addition to the service hours, what other coursework did you complete for the service-learning component of this course?

_____

_____

7. Did you do a final paper or a formal presentation to meet the final requirements of the service-learning component? Please explain.

_____

_____

8. How would you rate your on-site supervision and training?

5	4	3	2	1
Excellent		Adequate		Poor

COMMENTS:

_____

_____

9. The site supervisor used my time efficiently.

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree		Agree		Strongly Disagree

COMMENTS:

_____

_____

10. This site should be used again for students in the future.

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree		Agree		Strongly Disagree

COMMENTS:

_____

_____

11. Is there anything that could have been done to improve your service-learning experience?

_____

_____

_____

12. Should we continue to use this community service organization as a site placement? Explain.

_____

_____

Thank you for completing this evaluation. If you are interested in engaging in other service-learning experiences, come by, call, or e-mail the Center for Service and Leadership, address, phone, fax

RETURN TO THE CENTER FOR SERVICE AND LEADERSHIP BY _____.

This evaluation is based on one designed by Augsburg College from *Community Service-Learning at Augsburg College: A Handbook for Instructors*, edited by Victoria Littlefield.

APPENDIX, No.6
Service-Learning Faculty Evaluation

SAMPLE

Service-Learning Faculty Evaluation

Please return by _____

Course name: _____

Faculty Name(s): _____

Number of students involved in service-learning project: _____

Service-learning project was: ☐ optional ☐ required

Projects and related assignments were worth what percentage of students grades? _____

Service-learning was integrated into course through (check all which apply):

☐ Class discussions ☐ Graded project (i.e. report, survey) ☐ Exit papers
☐ Portfolio ☐ Journals
☐ Class presentations ☐ Other: _____

1. How was the service-learning component valuable to your students? Please check all that apply:
   - ☐ Improved written communication skills
   - ☐ Improved oral communication skills
   - ☐ Improved critical thinking/analytical skills
   - ☐ Exposed student to cultures different from their own
   - ☐ Helped them to understand how communities and/or organizations work and function
   - ☐ Other: _____

2. Did the service-learning experience help students to gain insights into the materials and concepts of the course? Please explain.

_____

_____

3. Did you encounter problems with any of the service-learning placements/projects? If so, please elaborate.

_____

_____

4. How did the service-learning project fit into your course goals and the goals of the community organizations?

_____

_____

5. How could the Center for Service and Leadership's staff have further assisted you with the service-learning component of your course?

_____

_____

6. Please feel free to share other comments.

_____

_____

_____

APPENDIX, No. 7
Service-Learning Partners Agreement

SAMPLE

SERVICE-LEARNING PARTNERS AGREEMENT

1 Credit 45 Contact hours
2 Credit 90 Contact hours
3 Credit 135 Contact hours

The purpose of this agreement is for you, in conjunction with your professor and community organization supervisor to outline the goals, activities learning objectives for your service experience. Be as explicit as possible in filling out this agreement. **Please return a copy of this agreement to your professor, site supervisor, and the Center for Service and Leadership.**

I. Contact Information

Student Name: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

Course Title: _____

Course #: _____ Section: _____

Professor(s): _____ Professor's Phone: _____

Organization: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____

_____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Supervisor Name: _____ Position: _____

What is the organization's mission?

_____

_____

II. The Service-Learning Project

A. Position Description: Describe in detail your role and responsibilities at the service-learning organization. List duties, projects to be completed, deadlines, etc.

_____

_____

_____

_____

Using your course syllabus, explain how this project links to course objectives and/or course topics.

B. Supervision: Describe in detail the supervision to be provided. Include what kind of instruction, and assistance you will receive by whom. Who will you speak to if a problem arises?

Evaluation: How will your work performance be evaluated? By whom?

III. Learning Objectives

A. Learning Objectives: What do you intend to learn through this experience? Be specific.

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

B. Learning Activities:

1. On-the-Site: Describe how your service-learning activities will enable you to meet your learning objectives. Include projects, research, conversations, etc. relating them to what you intend to learn.

2. Off-the-Site: List readings, writing, courses, etc. you will carry out which will help you meet your learning objectives.

_____

_____

_____

_____

C. Evaluation: How will you know what you have learned, or that you have achieved your learning objectives? How will you evaluate your progress towards meeting these objectives?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Minimum Number of service hours?_____ Beginning Date:_____ Ending Date: _____

IV. Agreement

Signing this form indicates you agree to complete the number of hours stated above that meets the needs of the community organization AND is relevant to this course.

_____

Student's Signature Date

_____

Organization Supervisor's Signature Date

_____

Undergraduate Advisor's Signature (Psychology only) Date

_____

Professor's Signature (three credit course) Course and Section Number Date

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George Mason University

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About the Authors

KAREN KASHMANIAN OATES is professor of integrative studies and biochemistry, and former associate dean of integrative studies, in New Century College of George Mason University. With John O'Connor, she developed the integrative studies program, a learning-community based program that requires experiential learning. Since 1998, Dr. Oates serves as Senior Science Scholar at the Association of American Colleges and Universities and is the co-principal investigator on a national dissemination grant through the National Science Foundation, entitled Science Education for New Civic Engagements and Responsibilities (SENCER). Dr. Oates leads the Association efforts and planning for the Learning Communities Conferences.

LYNN HERTRICK LEAVITT is director of the Center for Service and Leadership at George Mason University where she provides direction to and management of the Center. She teaches leadership theory and experiential learning courses, designs and facilitates leadership training, and advises student leaders. Prior to her work at George Mason University, she provided leadership education and training to students at Case Western Reserve University. She earned her B.S. from Miami University of Ohio, an M.Ed. from Cleveland State University, and is currently completing her Ph.D. in Higher Education Administration with a focus on Adult Learning and Experiential Education at George Mason University.

AAC&U's Statement on Liberal Learning

A truly liberal education is one that prepares us to live responsible, productive, and creative lives in a dramatically changing world. It is an education that fosters a well-grounded intellectual resilience, a disposition toward lifelong learning, and an acceptance of responsibility for the ethical consequences of our ideas and actions. Liberal education requires that we understand the foundations of knowledge and inquiry about nature, culture and society; that we master core skills of perception, analysis, and expression; that we cultivate a respect for truth; that we recognize the importance of historical and cultural context; and that we explore connections among formal learning, citizenship, and service to our communities.

We experience the benefits of liberal learning by pursuing intellectual work that is honest, challenging, and significant, and by preparing ourselves to use knowledge and power in responsible ways. Liberal learning is not confined to particular fields of study. What matters in liberal education is substantial content, rigorous methodology, and an active engagement with the societal, ethical, and practical implications of our learning. The spirit and value of liberal learning are equally relevant to all forms of higher education and to all students.

Because liberal learning aims to free us from the constraints of ignorance, sectarianism, and myopia, it prizes curiosity and seeks to expand the boundaries of human knowledge. By its nature, therefore, liberal learning is global and pluralistic. It embraces the diversity of ideas and experiences that characterize the social, natural, and intellectual world. To acknowledge such diversity in all its forms is both an intellectual commitment and a social responsibility, for nothing less will equip us to understand our world and to pursue fruitful lives.

The ability to think, to learn, and to express oneself both rigorously and creatively, the capacity to understand ideas and issues in context, the commitment to live in society, and the yearning for truth are fundamental features of our humanity. In centering education upon these qualities, liberal learning is society's best investment in our shared future.

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